POSITIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN OFFERING OF THE TRANSACTION USED BY PROSTITUTES IN BANGUNSARI

Suswanto Ismadi Megah S.
Dosen Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Unrika, Batam, Indonesia
megah76@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to identify how the prostitutes who considered as 'the marginalized people' still had polite side although that money is the prostitute's first orientation, and sexual favours would be the potential client's first orientation. Hence, at the initial stage of communication between the prostitute and the potential client, there would be a considerable amount of negotiation between them as they offer and counter offer each other. The data collected by using recording data and transcription of the offering. Then the data analyzed descriptive-qualitatively based on politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory.

The result of the study that although the Indonesian language was known as the national language in Indonesia but Javanese still survived among Javanese people, even prostitutes in Bangunsari. Whenever the Javanese language was use would consider the polite styles based the degree of the Javanese level. The use of lower level of the Javanese language due to their limited educational and socio-economic backgrounds, the subjects were observed to be more at ease using the lower level. The data showed that mostly prostitutes used positive politeness strategies However, despite the 'coarse' nature of their vocation and their educational as well as socio-economic backgrounds. There were six of the positive strategies used by the subjects during 'the transaction'. This study concluded that the use of the Indonesian language due to build conversation was more easily and equally. Therefore, the use of Indonesian language was to save 'the face' and to avoid miscommunication among them.

Key words: Positive Politeness, Offering, Transaction and Prostitutes

A. Introduction

Communication will be influenced by the background of the speaker, for instance, their culture. In the Javanese culture, for example, indirectness in speech and action is considered more polite than being direct; indirectness therefore is part of daily practice. This is done to preserve a good relationship between the speaker and the hearer. In support of this, Gunarwan (1992:1) states that the Javanese tend to speak more indirectly than the Bataks. Geertz (1961) and Suseno (1984) stress the importance of understanding Javanese etiquette as an introduction into the understanding of Javanese politeness. They both explain at length the Javanese principles of *urmat* or *hormat* (respect) and *rukun* (harmony). Therefore, in applying these principles during communication, the Javanese speaker is habitually observed as speaking often in an indirect manner as a show of respect for the hearer and to create and maintain a harmonious relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

At the same time, there is the Indonesian language which is the national language of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesian has replaced the local language as the alternative language of communication for the Javanese speaker without considering the social background of the hearer. Holmes (2001) adds that Indonesian is used as an alternative language to the local languages in order to avoid making the wrong choice in speech levels during communication and giving rise to unnecessary conflicts caused by the misunderstanding.

In the world of prostitution it can be said that money is the prostitute's first orientation, and sexual favours would be the potential client's first orientation. Hence, at the initial stage of communication between the prostitute and the potential client, there would be a considerable amount of negotiation between them as they offer and counter offer each other. Holmes (2001:1) says that "the way people talk is influenced by the social context in which they are talking". As a community that is marginalized by society on account of the business they offer, Javanese prostitutes may have a unique way of communicating their intentions to their potential clients.

Prostitution has often been referred to as the oldest profession in the world. In Indonesia, where the main religion is Islam which does not condone prostitution, the profession is thriving to a point where the business of selling and buying of sex is done in the open. Lin Leam Lim (1998:42) reports that the biggest brothel complex in Asia in terms of the number of active prostitutes is in Surabaya.

In a more recent context, Elis (2007:15) uses 'politeness' as a technical pragmatic term to refer to "ways in which linguistic action is carried out in a social cultural setting". In addition to that, according to Reiter (2000:1) it is commonly agreed that politeness is not an innate ability; it is a skill that is acquired through the process of socialization. Positive politeness also used by strangers in the interaction to get closer to the hearer. The positive face is to show rationally that everybody wants their face preserved, and they wants to be appreciated. Thus the hearer needs to respect or face want from the speaker. Positive politeness is used as a kind of social acceleration. Brown and Levinson (1987:103-128) explain that there are fifteen (15) strategies of positive politeness, such as:

(i)   *Strategy 1 : Notice, attend to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods)*
        In general, this output suggest that S should take notice of aspects of H's condition (noticeable changes, remarkable possessions, anything which look as though H would want S to notice and approve of it). Example used as FTA include in English: a compliment, an offer, or a request.

(ii)   *Strategy 2 : Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)*
        This is often done with exaggerated intention, stress, and other exaggerated or emphatic words/particles (e.g. *for sure. Really, exactly, absolutely).*

(iii)   *Strategy 3 : Intensity Interest to H*
        Another way for S to communicate to H that he shares some of his wants is intensity the interest of his own (S,s) contributions to the conversation, by 'making a good story'. This may be done by using the 'vivid present' direct speech, taq question.

(iv)   *Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers.*
        This strategy includes in-group usages of address forms, of language or dialect or slang, and of ellipsis. Other address forms used to convey such in group membership include terms of address like: Mac, mate, buddy, pal, honey, dear, dukie, luv, babe, mom, blonde, brother, sister, cutie, sweetheart, and guys, fell as.
        .
(v)   *Strategy 5 : Seek agreement (to find and try to approval by the opponent said)*
        For this strategy there are two ways to seek agreement, such as safe topics and repetition. Safe topics are used when speaker stresses his agreement with hearer and therefore to satisfy hearer's desire to be right. Agreement may also be stressed by repeating part or some utterances in conversation and by using particles that function to indicate emphatic agreement such as: yes, uh huh, really, etc.

(vi)   *Strategy 6 : Avoid disagreement*
        This strategy sees S using the 'Token' agreement (*Yes, but, then and so*) to convey disagreement. H in reciprocate shows that he or she agree but actually he

disagree with S. The desire to agree or appear to agree with H leads also to mechanisms for pretending to agree, instances of 'token' agreement.

(vii)   *Strategy 7 : Presuppose / raise / assert common ground*
     In this strategy small talk used by Speaker. The value of S's spending time and effort on being with H, as a mark of friendship or interest in him, gives rise to the strategy of redressing an FTA by talking for a while about unrelated topics.

(viii)   *Strategy 8 : Joke (make a joke)*
     Since jokes are based on mutual shared background knowledge and values, jokes may be used to stress that shared background or those shared values. Joking is a basic positive-politeness technique, for putting H 'at ease'.

(ix)   *Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose Speaker's knowledge of and concern for Hearer's wants.*
     This strategy use to indicate that S and H to co-operators. Hence S pushes H to cooperate with speaker S is to assert or imply knowledge of H's wants and willingness above may sometimes function in this way, This include doing the FTA of offers and requests as many utterances.

(x)   *Strategy 10 : Offer, promise*
     In order to redress the potential threat of some FTAs. Hence, S may choose to stress his cooperation with H in another way. He may, that is, claim that (within a certain sphere of relevance) whatever H wants, S wants *foe* him and will help to obtain. Offers and promises are the natural outcome of choosing this strategy; even if they are false. Usually this strategy often used in interaction.

(xi)   *Strategy 11 : Be optimistic*
     This strategy assumes that H wants S's wants for s (or for S and H) and will help S to obtain them. To simply, H makes tacit claim that H will cooperate with S and it will be done with mutual shared interests. This is done with the use of a little, a bit, for a second or token tag (e.g. OK? do you…won't you?) for requests.

(xii)   *Strategy 12 : Include both S and h in the activity*.
     This strategy use an inclusive 'we' form, when S really means 'you' or 'me', he can call upon the cooperative assumptions and thereby redress FTAs. Nothing that let's in English is an inclusive 'we' form.

(xiii)   *Strategy 13 : Give (or ask for) reasons*
     Another aspect of including H in the activity is for S to give reasons as to why he wants what he wants. By including H thus in his practical reasoning, and assuming reflexivity (H wants S's wants), H is thereby led to see the reasonableness of S's FTA (or so S hopes). In other words, giving reasons is a way of implying 'I can help you' or 'you can help me', and assuming cooperation, a way of showing what help is needed.

(xiv)   *Strategy 14 : Assume or assert reciprocity*
     The existence of cooperation between S and H may also be claimed or urged by giving evidence of reciprocal rights or obligations obtaining between S and H. Thus S may say, in effect, 'I'll do X for you if you do Y for 'me' , or 'I did X for you last week, so you do Y for me this week' (or vice versa).

(xv)   Strategy 15 : give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

Finally, S may satisfy H's positive – face want (that S wants, to some degree) by actually satisfying some of H's wants. Hence we have the classic positive – politeness action of gift giving, not only tangible gifts (which demonstrate that S knows some of H's wants and wants them to be fulfilled), but human-relations wants such as those illustrated in many of the outputs considered above-the wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to, and so on.

B. Methodology

This study employs the Brown and Levinson (1987) Politeness Theory as its theoretical framework and for the analysis of the data obtained. In studies involving FTA, it not so much the FTA that is the focus but more importantly how the FTA is delivered, what forms of politeness are used and whether the strategy used has been successful in mitigating potential problems and meeting positive face needs. The subjects of this study consist of 15 prostitutes working at a brothel in Surabaya. They are categorized as lower class prostitutes who offer their service for the price ranging from Rp.50,000,00 to 70.000,00 for one session and between Rp. 200,000,00 and 250,000,00 for a full session (which means serving the client the whole day or the whole night). According to Koentjoro (2004:65) the rates of the sex services are based on four criteria: length of service, age and physical features (for example skin color and body shape) of the prostitutes as well as the skills they possess. All this information was obtained as and when required and with prior permission from the caretaker and the head of village security.

C. Research Finding

The subjects in this study were observed to have employed six of the fifteen positive politeness strategies postulated by Brown and Levinson (1987). These six strategies are presented below with examples from the data to illustrate their usage in context.

a. Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers

In-group identity markers are used to foster solidarity between speakers. Before a speaker starts a conversation with another person, he/she would have assessed the other person and would have decided, based on this assessment, how he/she wants to treat the other person. In terms of address forms, it was observed that the subjects used *mas* or *pak* (*sir* in English) to address the potential client to show that they are of the same ethnicity (Javanese). *Cak* and *kang* are are other forms of address which are commonly used in the Surabaya dialect to address people from the lower status level or low payment workers such as porters, *becak* drivers, and the uneducated. However, the subjects in this study were not observed to have made use of these forms throughout the data.

The subjects use identity markers to make the potential clients feel respected and appreciated so that the potential clients will feel obliged to fulfill the subject's want to use their 'service'. In general, Strategy 4 of positive politeness was observed to be in play with seventeen of the twenty-five subjects.

b. Strategy 5: Seek agreement

Strategy 5 involves the speaker agreeing with the hearer. This agreement can be conveyed by using '*yes*' or the repetition of some words. *Yo* or *iyo* have the same meaning in Javanese, as *ya* or *iya* do in standard Indonesian. For examples below

Subject 6	Translation
: ***Yo** wis mas ayo istirahat…[smile].*	Yes already come on take a rest
Subject 13	
: ***Yo** wis sewidak gak gelem? / yo wis akeh liane.*	It is okay sixty thousand {thousand Rupiahs} / never mind many others.

Their agreements above that to the potential clients' bargaining with *Ya*, *Iyo* and *Iya*. Wouk (2001:188) states that the function of *ya* and *iya* in conversations in Indonesian is "grow naturally out of its literal meaning" and has a basic meaning as an agreement.

c. Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement
This strategy is used to avoid disagreement with the speaker, hence the hearer responds to the speaker's preceding utterance with '*yes, but…*'.   The subjects used similar strategies incorporated with influences from the Javanese culture to soften or avoid disagreements with the clients.

Subject 1   **Translation**
          : *[smile] //. ra po po.*   [smile] // it's okay.

Subject 5
           : *Ya / nggak pa pa…[smile]*   Yes / Never mind

Subject 8
          : *[silent] Yo wis nggak pa pa.*   [silent] Yes it's okay, never mind.
          The incomplete sentence implies what she would rather get an agreement from the potential client to render and pay for her services, instead of just agreeing to just buy her a drink. Thus, *gak pa pa* and *cuma* are used to avoid disagreement in much a similar way as the English '*yes*' followed by '*but*'.

d.Strategy 12: Include both Speaker and Hearer in the activity
When Speaker really means 'you' or 'me', he can call upon the cooperative assumptions and thereby redress FTAs." The subject invites the potential client to enter her premises, but in actuality, she is suggesting they both retreat inside together with the use of the word '*mlebu*'.

Subject 6   **Translation**
        : *Mlebu mas.*   Come in, sir. (i.e. *Let us go in together*)

e. Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons
This strategy is used by the speaker to minimize the FTAs by giving reasons for the action taken. The speaker gives reasons in order to influence the hearer to agree with her reasons.
Subject 12

: *Kalo pulang pagi agak mahal mas // karena disini kamarnya juga mahal mbayarnya*	If {you} choose to stay until morning it is quite expensive // because this room here is quite expensive

Subject 14

: *Eh // nggak bisa tapi kalo dari jam 12 malam sampai pagi nggak pa pa.*	Eh // that's not possible but if (you want to render my services) from 12 midnight until morning it is never mind.

Disagreeing will threaten the client's face and by providing a reason for disagreeing, the threat is mitigated to some extent. The FTA here is in the form of Subject's request for the client to understand why she has to disagree with the hope that the understanding will make the client agree with her.

f. Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity
This strategy is to offer or expect a reciprocal act, where the speaker will do X if the hearer will

do Y or if the Hearer gives the speaker Y, then, the speaker will give X to the hearer.

Subject 2	**Translation**
: *Rong jam yo patang poloh.*	Two hours, yes for forty (thousand Rupiahs)

Subject 11

(13) S11 : *Kalau tiga lima // [smile] cari yang lain saja.*	If thirty-five {thousand rupiahs} // [smile] just go find another

Refusing the client's offer of Rp. 40,000.00 outright, Subject reciprocates with what she can offer for that amount of money, which is two hours of service. It is then up to the potential client to accept or refuse the negotiated offer.

D. Conclusion

The sample of this study comprised 15 Javanese lower class prostitutes between the ages of 18 to 45 years old working at a brothel complex in Surabaya, Indonesia. The tools of this study consisted of three parts: recording of naturally occurring conversation between the subjects and their potential clients, informal interview, and non-participant observation. The data was tape recorded and transcribed with permission from the subjects and their care takers. Interviews were then carried out with all 25 subjects to obtain further information on their background and experience.

As discovered through the literature review for this study, research on politeness covers a wide range of cultures and languages. Each culture will have its own politeness style and strategies. As such Javanese politeness is unique as it is put into play through a language that is in itself also unique due to the speech levels between the speaker and the hearer. This uniqueness is clearly expressed in Holmes (2001:101) who states that "Javanese has a complex linguistically marked politeness system based on assessments of relative status". The complexity of Javanese language opens it to vast areas yet to be explored. Although this study has only looked at a small aspect of the language due to its scope and limitations, its findings have revealed interesting features of the language, the politeness that is embedded within it as well as the socio-cultural characteristics of its speakers who make the language come alive.   It is hoped that these findings will encourage other work to be carried out in the area so we can have a better understanding of how we speak, whether we are leaders of great nations or prostitutes.

REFRENCES

Brown, Penelope. 1976. "Women and politeness; A new perspective on language and society. Review of 'Language and woman's place' by R. Lakoff". *Review in Antropology 3: 240-249.*

Brown, Penelope and Levinson, C. Stephen.1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Elis Nurhayati. 2007. *Power and Politeness: An Analysis of Electronic Mail Messages in UNDP Indonesia office.* M.A. Thesis. Jakarta: Atmajaya Catholic Universiy.Unpublished.

Fraser, Bruce and Nolen, William. 1981. " The association of deference with linguistic form". *International Journal of the Sociology of the Language 27,* 93-109.

Geertz, Clifford. 1960. *The Religion of Java*. New York: Free Press.

Geertz, Hilder. 1961. *The Javanese Kindship Family*. Glencoe, IL Free Press.

Goffman, Erving.1981. On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction.*Psychiatry,*18: 213-31.

Grice, H.P. 1975. "Logic and Conversation", *Syntax and Semantics, Speech Act, 3,* New York: Academic Press.

Gunarwan, Asim. 1992. "Persepsi kesantunan direktif di dalam bahasa Indonesia di antara beberapa kelompok etnik di Jakarta". In B. Kaswanti Purwo (ed.). *PELLBA*. Jakarta Atmajaya Catholic University.

Hartati, Sri. 2002. *Pragmalinguistic Failures and Grammatical Errors in Directives: A Case Study in Making Request by Students of the UPN Computer Science Faculty.* M.A.Thesis Atmajaya Chatolic University. Jakarta: Unpublished.

Holmes, Janet. 2001. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics.* London: Longman.

Jamaliah Mohd. Ali. 1995. *Malaysian Student Seminar: A Study of Pragmatic Features in Verbal Interaction.* Ph.D. Thesis. University of Malaya. Kuala Lumpur. Unpublished

Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Mulholland, Joan.1991.*The Language of Negotiation: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Improving Communication.* London: Routledge.

Raja Rozina Raja Suleiman.2004.*Face Consideration in Malay: An Examination of Offers and Requests in Malay Plays.* Ph.D Thesis. University of Malaya.Unpublished.

Reiter, Rosina Marquez. 2000. *Linguistic Politeness in Britain and Uruguay*: *A Contrastive Study of Request and Apologies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Co.

Searle, J.R. 1969. *Speech Acts*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Wouk, F. 2001. Solidarity in Indonesia conversation: The discourse marker *ya. Journal of Pragmatics 33.* 177-191.